CLAIMS

1. An authentication server for automatically selecting one of a plurality of authentications identified respectively by authentication identifiers (AUID) in order to authenticate a user of a terminal (T) in order to authorize the user to access a service dispensed by a service server (SE) of a provider identified by a provider identifier (PRID) via a communication network (RC), characterized in that it comprises:

means (MSA) for selecting an authentication identifier (AUID) in a memory (TA1 to TA6) as a function of the provider identifier (PRID) and the type of the terminal and/or the type of the communication network, and means (MA) for authenticating the user by means of an authentication process associated with the authentication identifier (AUID).

2. An authentication server according to claim 1, wherein the selecting means (MSA) selects (E4) the authentication identifier (AUID) as a function of an authentication security level (NAU) in corresponding relationship to the provider identifier (PRID).

3. An authentication server according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the selecting means (MSA) selects the authentication identifier (AUID) as a function of authentication rules (RE) associated with the provider identifier (PRID) and applied to at least an authentication security level (NAU) corresponding to the provider identifier (PRID) and/or to the terminal type and/or to the communication network type.

4. An authentication server according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that the service server (SE) comprises means (API) for transmitting (E2) at least the provider identifier (PRID) and the terminal type and/or the communication network type to the selecting means (MSA) in response to a connection set up between the user terminal (T) and the service server (SE).

5. An authentication server according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the selecting means (MSA) transmits to the terminal (F2) a list ({SID}) of services identified by service identifiers (SID) in response to a connection set up between the user terminal (T) and the selecting means (MSA), and the terminal transmits (F3) to the selection means a service identifier (SID) of a service selected by the user in the transmitted list in order for the selecting means to select the authentication identifier (AUID) as a function also of the selected service identifier (SID).

6. An authentication server according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the selecting means (MSA) transmits to the terminal (F2) a list ({PRID}) of provider identifiers (PRID) in response to a connection set up between the user terminal (T) and the selecting means (MSA), and the terminal transmits (F3) to the selecting means a provider identifier (PRID) selected by the user in the transmitted list in order for the selecting means to select the authentication identifier (AUID) as a function in particular of the selected provider identifier (PRID).

7. An authentication server according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein, if the user has been authenticated, the authenticating means (MSA) transmits (E13, F16) to the

service server (SE) the terminal type, the communication network type, the transmitted service identifier (SID), and a security level (NAU) of the authentication designated by the selected authentication identifier (AUID).

5

8. An authentication server according to any one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that it comprises two separate servers respectively including the selecting means (MSA) and the authenticating means (MA).

10

9. A method for automatically selecting one of a plurality of authentications identified respectively by authentication identifiers (AUID) in order to authenticate a user of a terminal (T) to authorize the user to access a

15 service dispensed by a service server (SE) of a provider identified by a provider identifier (PRID) via a communication network (RC), characterized in that it comprises the steps of :

- selecting an authentication identifier (AUID) in a

20 memory (TA1 to TA6) as a function of the provider identifier (PRID) and the type of the terminal and/or the type of the communication network, and

- authenticating the user by an authentication process associated with the authentication identifier (AUID).

25

10. A computer program on an information medium, loaded into and executed in an authentication server (SA) for automatically selecting one of a plurality of authentications respectively identified by authentication identifiers (AUID)

30 in order to authenticate a user of a terminal (T) in order to authorize the user to access a service dispensed by a service server (SE) of a provider identified by a provider identifier

(PRID) via a communication network (RC), said program including program instructions for:

    - selecting an authentication identifier (AUID) in a memory (TA1 to TA6) as a function of the provider identifier (PRID) and the type of the terminal and/or the type of the communication network, and

    - authenticating the user by an authentication process associated with the authentication identifier (AUID).